



Signal Center: J. H. Barnett Jr. (left), Indiana emergency co-ordinator for amateur radio operators, inspects TARS emergency communications unit at hamfest yesterday as Dr. John Alexander, a director of the club, puts out a microphone signal. Looking on are (right) Darwin Covert and Hank Galbraith.




Time Out: Clifford McGuyer, right, chats with Sybren Reitsma of Curacao, Dutch West Indies, radio ham who visited TARS hamfest yesterday.

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By PAUL TOWNSEND

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The man from Curacao, Dutch West Indies, got a big hand when he was announced as winner of the prize awarded to the amateur radio operator who traveled the greatest distance to attend yesterday's Tri-State Amateur Radio Society's hamfest.

He was Sybren Reitsma, an executive there for the Shell Oil Co., and one of eight radio "hams" on the island. Reitsma's trip to Evansville and the hamfest resulted from reading while on a vacation trip to the U. S. a news item in the radio hams' national magazine, QST, about the hamfest and a desire to meet personally some Hoosier hams with whom he had talked by shortwave radio.

"I made up my mind I was coming here and here I am," he said with a broad grin.

Reitsma got a lift on his trip here by Indianapolis hams who, alerted by local TARS to whom he had written about his desire to visit the outing, brought him to Evansville from Indianapolis.

However, Reitsma was only one of more than 160 Evansville and visiting hams plus families, who gathered at the Rural Center to renew acquaintances in person previously made over the air waves and to inspect the local club's major project—the emergency communications unit which now is available in any type of emergency which might cut off

telephone or telegraph communications.

The plant, installed in a house trailer, is completely equipped to transmit or receive messages on any amateur wave length.

An engine driven generator provides electric power so the unit can be put into operation in a pasture or on a hilltop. Yesterday it was serving travelers to the hamfest by providing directions direct to automobiles.

One of the busiest visitors to the hamfest was J. H. Barnett Jr., emergency co-ordinator for amateur radio operators in Indiana.

His greatest interest was in the local club's emergency unit.

"That is a great project," he said. "The fact that the unit can be moved anywhere on short notice and immediately be put into operation is a great asset to your community."

Barnett told how hams handled communications for the Ground Observation Corps filter center at South Bend during last winter's phone strike.

"The operation was set up within two hours of the time we were asked for help," he said.

Another official visitor was When G. Hechstetler, head of the Industrial Arts Department in the Mar-

shville High School and chairman of the Indiana Radio Club Council.

Hochstetler says there are 26 affiliated clubs in the state and he estimates there are nearly 4,000 amateur operators.

Informal Hamfest

The hamfest was an informal one set up by Chairman Wilbur Weisling to provide congeniality and entertainment of grownups and children while the hams went about the more serious work of the session.

Highlight of the meeting was the award of prizes for the best home-made automobile rig and the best commercially made outfit.

The prize for the best homemade rig went to Bernard Baldridge of Kratzville road and Peggy Coulter, Muncie, won the prize for the best commercial outfit.